

**Harris Town Board  
GIS Demonstration by  
the Staff of Grand Rapids  
Wednesday, August 31, 2011, 7:00pm**

The Harris Town Board met on Wednesday, August 31, 2011 at 7:00 p.m., in the board room at Grand Rapids City Hall, with the following members present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, and Larry Key, and Clerk Michele Smith. Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams

Present from Grand Rapids: Tom Pagel - City Engineer, and Mike LeClaire – GIS Technician.

**The purpose of tonight's round table was to see a demonstration of the GIS system currently being used by the City of Grand Rapids staff, for their cemetery and various other purposes.**

**GIS system**

The city staff asked the township board at previous round table discussions, if they'd be interested in the GIS system used by the city – especially for use with their cemetery. The board agreed they were, and so Pagel set up a demonstration by the city to show the group how the GIS system works.

**Cemetery**

Mike LeClaire led the demonstration, and showed how the GIS system works for Itasca Cemetery. It was noted that cemetery sites are color coded – green for available, blue for reserved, red for occupied, and no color if the site was unsellable. Also, cremations were indicated with a “+”, and placed in the area of the site where it was located. The direction that caskets laid was also noted (if laying east to west, or north to south).

Each site could be clicked on, and various information would come up, including cremation vs. burial, deceased's DOB and DOD, a link to their obituary, a link to a photo of their headstone, purchaser's name, price paid, and date, etc.

The database is searchable, and reports can be printed based on the results. It's also possible to print a cemetery deed from the database. And it can be accessed online from the website, if so desired and programed.

**Roads & Parks**

Mike also showed the board how the GIS system could be used for roads, including right of way locations and sizes, and easements (type, size, who bought from, etc.). Pagel commented that he really likes this feature as it saves him hours of research time. Also, all culverts are noted in the city's GIS system – the date input, size, and photographs of the culvert. Signage is also being added, to know where they are, what type they are, dates replaced, reflectivity status, etc.

It was noted that the GIS system could also be used for the township's parks if desired – where each piece of equipment or building could be input, with photos and ongoing information on repairs, maintenance, inspection dates, etc.

**Costs**

The City of Grand Rapids has to have the GIS system and so is asking other municipalities if they would like to join a consortium in order to reduce their overall costs. There are 2 types of costs: An annual GIS access cost, which occurs year after year, and data input costs – which is variable, depending on needs.

The city pays approximately \$25,000/year for access to the GIS the system. The cost for others to join is figured at \$1 per person, based on population, plus a portion of the server costs. **For Harris Township, these costs would be \$3,253 for access plus \$1,084/year for the server costs, or a total of \$4,342 annually.**

**The variable costs** for finding the GIS coordinates of the graves, and for data input, would be based on who does the data entry, and how much information is input. For a city employee to do this, the cost would be \$26.70/hour. However, the ICC Engineering interns/students could do it, and the cost would be much less (\$10/hour). The maintenance crew could also do the input, if desired (and as time allows).

Other options to consider would be putting the database on the township's website, vs just putting it on the Clerk's and Maintenance crew's computers – which would be linked so information could be shared between them. It was noted that information is backed up every night on the city's server, and once a month it's backed up in 3 different places.

Training on the system would be done by Mike LeClaire.

### **Next steps**

The board was impressed with the capabilities of the city's GIS system, especially for use with the cemetery and roads. However, the priority for the township would be for use at the cemetery.

Mike offered to meet with Clerk Smith to review current cemetery data and processes, and then **submit a proposal for consideration** by the town board, for the variable input costs, including GIS mapping of the cemetery and data entry. The board liked this idea, and so Smith and LeClaire will meet in the next week or so to review the cemetery information.

With no further projects to discuss, the round table between the Harris Township Board and the Grand Rapids city staff adjourned at approximately 8:15pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith - Clerk